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## MENTAL ADVENTURING

U. S. Dep.

A radio talk by Ella Gardner, Extension Service broadcast Wednesday, May 6, 1936, in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour transmitted NBC and a network of 51 affiliated radio stations.

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Last month I discussed with you very briefly the plans that some farm families have made in order to find time and opportunity for enjoyable spare time activities. Today I should like to report to you a few of the special interests pursued by farm women.

Have you ever observed that mothers and fathers often seem to think that they are made and finished and that all of their future effort must be spent upon their children? I want to share with you a few tales about women who are not deluding themselves in this fashion.

One of the strong demands that has been made upon home demonstration workers in recent years is for suggestions for what I like to think of as mental adventuring,-study courses, help with special interests, training in hand and mind skills.

Women give various reasons for wanting information of this sort. One woman said, "Of course, I want to be interesting to my husband and my children but beyond that, I don't want to bore myself so, before I'm old, I'm going to stock up with interesting thoughts and the ability to do one or two things besides housework." Rebecca McCann gave her Cheerful Cherub a similar philosophy. You remember one of her verses says:

"Although old age is creeping on  
To all its troubles I'm resigned.  
My joints may stiffen  
But I'll not have rheumatism  
In my mind."

Studies have shown that the farm homemaker works about nine hours every day in the week. This presumably allows three or four hours a day of free time but actually the demands are so great upon the time of a person who while she is a worker is also the mother of children who run in and out demanding attention, and the assistant and guide of a husband who may call upon her for help or advice thruout the day, that she is not likely to be able to count upon so much time daily nor is she likely to find herself free for uninterrupted periods unless she goes away from home. With efficient methods and planning, however, she may save from two to four hours daily for her own use, especially during certain seasons of the year.

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When she has leisure how does she use it? I have talked with many women in camp and at institutes. They all expressed a definite feeling that they must use time in a profitable way. This is especially true among women of forty and over who find themselves with more leisure as their children leave the home. They consider as profitable uses of leisure, reading, cultivating a garden, participating in church, school or civic organizations, resting, and creating many forms of handicraft, especially sewing, knitting and crocheting that may be used by members of the family or to make the home more attractive. Resting and napping fill a part of the homemaker's free time and this is surely a wise and effective use of leisure by women who rise early and are as strenuous in their work as the majority of farm women are.

Reading ranks high as a leisure time interest. The selection and enjoyment of books are being discussed on these programs. Their choice and study form a part of the home demonstration programs of several of the states. Kentucky farm women, for instance, have studied homemakers of all parts of the world through fiction, music, and folkdances. Women of South Dakota, Nebraska, and other states have followed a similar plan for studying this and other countries and times.

Information about gardening has been sought from the Ext. Serv. This has included the use of native shrubs, landscaping, the care of a garden, and similar problems. Bird walks, flower hunting trips, star gazing evenings, and many other nature study jaunts have been a part of camp and club programs and there are many women who might say as a girl did after a week in camp, "Just think how I've wasted time! Fourteen years in this grand world and I've only been seeing half of it!"

This brief outline barely touches a few of the fields in which the farm homemaker is anxious to go on learning. She has discovered the truth of a statement Don Byrne gives to one of the characters in "The Wind Bloweth." "Oh sure" she says, "everything's adventure, hinny, every time you go looking for something queer and strange and something with a fine color and shape to it. Adventure isn't the quick fist and nimble foot, it's in the hungry heart and itching mind."

